

Elementary School Lesson 2

Rule of Law: How Does the Constitution Protect Our Rights in Court?

Materials Needed

**Indicates material included at the end of the lesson.*

- For the teacher:
 - Concept Webs about citizenship created in previous lesson (if available)
 - *Abe Lincoln's Hat* by Martha Brenner or *Grace's Letter to Lincoln* by Peter and Connie Roop
- For the students:
 - Pencils, paper
 - U.S. Bill of Rights, Amendments 4-8*
 - Article 1 (Bill of Rights) of the Indiana Constitution* (cut into sections for use in activity)
 - 3-2-1 Activity*

Vocabulary

- *Law*: A set of rules issued and enforced by a government that binds every member of society.
- *Counsel*: (1) A lawyer engaged in the trial or management of a case in court, or (2) a lawyer appointed to advise and represent in legal matters an individual client or a corporation and especially a public body.
- *Trial*: The examination before a court of the facts of law in a court case.
- *Jury*: A body of persons sworn to give a verdict on some matter submitted to them.

Introductory Questions

Review the Concept Webs from the previous lessons, if available. Highlight the areas of citizenship related to due process, trials, and serving on a jury.

Next, ask students the following questions allowing for “elbow talk” before soliciting answers (full explanation of elbow talk at end of unit).

- **In what way(s) did Abraham Lincoln work to ensure that people had their rights respected?** *Example: He was a lawyer and helped people. He held public office.*
- **Where can we find our right to a lawyer written down?** *The state and federal constitutions, statutes (laws that legislatures make), and also in decisions of courts.*
- **When might someone need a lawyer?** *Accept reasonable answers*

Suggested Lesson Procedure

Give pairs of students copies of the parts of the U.S. Bill of Rights, Amendments 4-8, or Article 1 (Bill of Rights) of the Indiana Constitution. The teacher can guide which students receive the more difficult/lengthy parts. Ask students to read the section, looking for any text talking about the law, lawyers, trials, and/or juries. Students might highlight to indicate important information. Ask student pairs to share their findings. Read aloud from the Bill of Rights Amendments 4-8 or the Indiana Constitution Article 1(Bill of Rights) and discuss.

Prompt students to focus on how Lincoln helped people as a lawyer while you read the story. Read excerpts from one of the two following stories: *Grace's Letter to Lincoln* or *Abe Lincoln's Hat*.

Why Lincoln Was a Lawyer: Abraham Lincoln, the Law & Civic Education (Elementary)

When done, ask students the following questions, allowing for “elbow talk” before sharing (full explanation of elbow talk at end of unit).

- **Did Lincoln like being a lawyer?** *Accept reasonable answers.*
- **Is there anything to add to the “Lincoln as a good citizen” web?** *Add any reasonable suggestions.*
- **Do you think Lincoln was a good lawyer? Why or why not?** *Accept reasonable answers. Add any answers that might work on the web.*
- Look back at the documents. Have students discuss the relationship between the amendments and some of the things Lincoln did.

Exit Activity

Have students complete the 3-2-1 Activity.*